



Robin Wiebler - NOAA Federal &lt;robin.wiebler@noaa.gov&gt;

**SAJ-2013-02595(SP-GGL) PGA Boulevard Elevation and Wetland Restoration**

1 message

**Brandon Howard - NOAA Federal** <brandon.howard@noaa.gov>

Mon, Dec 8, 2014 at 4:04 PM

To: "Lips, Garrett G SAJ" &lt;Garrett.G.Lips@usace.army.mil&gt;

Cc: Pace Wilber - NOAA Federal &lt;Pace.Wilber@noaa.gov&gt;, Robin Wiebler - NOAA Federal &lt;robin.wiebler@noaa.gov&gt;, Ron Miedema &lt;Miedema.Ron@epamail.epa.gov&gt;, "John\_Wrublik@fws.gov" &lt;John\_Wrublik@fws.gov&gt;, ashleigh\_blackford@fws.gov, Benjamin Studt &lt;BStudt@pbcgov.org&gt;

Hi Garrett.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Jacksonville District's public notice SAJ-2013-02595(SP-GGL), dated November 17, 2014. The applicant, the Florida Department of Transportation District 4, requests authorization from the Department of the Army to impact 8.11 acres of waters of the U.S. to elevate a portion of PGA Boulevard between the C-18 Canal and State Road 710. The work will include a 58-foot bridge, replacing a 14-foot by 6-foot box culvert, and installing a new 36-inch culvert. The work will improve wetland hydrology in the Loxahatchee Slough. As the nation's federal trustee for the conservation and management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fishery resources, the following comments and recommendations are provided pursuant to authorities of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

NMFS' staff visited the site on December 5, 2014. Wetlands and surface waters within the project area are connected to the Loxahatchee Slough, the Loxahatchee River, and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean. The wetlands that would be impacted by the project range from moderate to high in quality. Vegetation within these wetlands includes Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), myrsine (*Rapanea punctata*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) and sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*). These wetlands provide water quality functions, such as removal of sediments, excess nutrients, and contaminants, that benefit and support these aquatic ecosystems. Through hydrological connections, these wetlands also contribute plant material and other useable nutrients (both dissolved and particulate organic matter) into aquatic food webs that include recreationally, commercially, and ecologically important species within downstream estuaries. However, the project will result in downstream benefits in these same estuaries. The overall project will result in a net gain in ecological function. This was confirmed in conversations with Palm Beach County's Environmental Resource Management (ERM) staff who support the project. Palm Beach County ERM is responsible for the management of the Loxahatchee Slough.

In addition to the direct impacts from filling wetlands, construction activities may impact adjacent wetlands through sedimentation and runoff. To minimize these impacts, NMFS recommends the applicant utilize best management practices, including staked hay bales, silt fencing, mats for construction equipment, and re-vegetation of denuded areas, to stabilize the disturbed soils.

Brandon

On Tue, Jul 8, 2014 at 12:41 PM, Brandon Howard - NOAA Federal &lt;brandon.howard@noaa.gov&gt; wrote:

Re: NMFS File # D6DAD-0487\_SAJ-2014-01231\_TamiamiTrailBridge\_FWCA\_FINAL

Location: 25.760952° North, 80.633022° West

Hi Garrett.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Jacksonville District's public notice SAJ-2014-01231(SP-GGL), dated July 12, 2014. The applicant, the Florida Department of

Transportation District 6, requests authorization from the Department of the Army to restore 17.23 acres of freshwater wetlands by elevating a 2.6 mile stretch of Tamiami Trail. The new bridge work will require filling of 2.97 acres of freshwater wetlands. The project begins just west of the Airboat Association property and continues west along Tamiami Trail in Miami-Dade County, Florida. As the nation's federal trustee for the conservation and management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fishery resources, the following comments and recommendations are provided pursuant to authorities of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Wetlands and surface waters within the project area are connected to The Everglades which drains to Florida Bay through the Shark River Slough. The wetlands that would be impacted by the project range from moderate to low in quality. Vegetation within these wetlands includes Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), myrsine (*Rapanea punctata*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) and sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*). The wetlands that would be impacted by the bridge provide water quality functions, such as removal of sediments, excess nutrients, and contaminants, that benefit and support these aquatic ecosystems. Through hydrological connections, these wetlands also contribute plant material and other useable nutrients (both dissolved and particulate organic matter) into aquatic food webs that include recreationally, commercially, and ecologically important species within downstream estuaries. However, the project will result in downstream benefits in these same estuaries. The overall project should result in a net gain in ecological function.

The Jacksonville District will review a functional assessment to determine if ecological functions lost during wetland fill will be offset by the bridge construction and subsequent restored areas. If the Jacksonville District would like our assistance, please let us know.

In addition to the direct impacts from filling wetlands, construction activities may impact adjacent wetlands through sedimentation and runoff. To minimize these impacts, NMFS recommends the applicant utilize best management practices, including staked hay bales, silt fencing, mats for construction equipment, and re-vegetation of denuded areas, to stabilize the disturbed soils.

Brandon

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